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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
MARCH 17, 2010**

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5476, An Act Concerning Pathology Billing Practices and to urge the committee to support the current law and take no further action on this legislation.

This legislation repeals a provision in Public Act 09-232 requiring a clinical laboratory to bill either the patient or the insurer for services -- as is currently the routine procedure for most health care services. The provision also specifically prohibits any third party from directly or indirectly charging or billing for those laboratory services unless the third party either performs or directly supervises the laboratory service or the third party is a physician or referring laboratory.

The current law prevents a third party from marking up the cost of the laboratory services when there is no direct involvement in the provision of such service. Similar laws have been passed in other states including: Arizona, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee. This common sense restriction eliminates the possibility of others adding to the cost for medical services. Patients already struggle with large medical bills. They need the protections from spurious additional charges that are contained in Public Act 09-232.

The committee should stand by its action last year and take no further action on House Bill 5476.